



THE WORKS OF  
ALFRED TENNYSON,

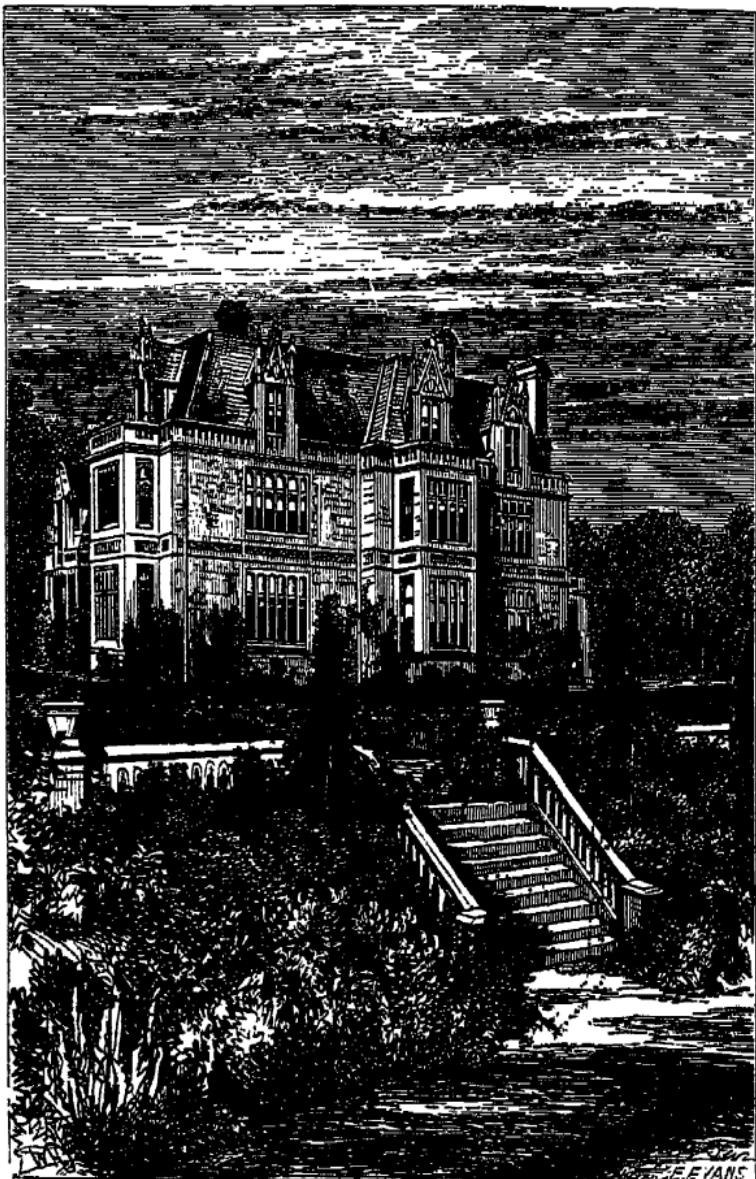
CABINET EDITION—IN TEN VOLUMES.

THE CABINET EDITION  
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ALDWORTH.  
MR. TENNYSON'S RESIDENCE.

THE WORKS OF  
ALFRED TENNYSON.

ENGLISH IDYLLS,  
AND OTHER POEMS.

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ENGLISH IDYLLS,  
AND OTHER POEMS.



# ENGLISH IDYLLS,

## AND OTHER POEMS.

### ŒNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning : but in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
 Mournful Cænone, wandering forlorn  
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
 Flew her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,  
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade  
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :  
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
 Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.  
 The purple flowers droop : the golden bee  
 Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.  
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
 And I am all aweary of my life.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves  
 That house the cold crown'd snake ! O mountain  
 brooks,  
 I am the daughter of a River-God,  
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all

My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“ O Mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die,  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft :  
Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes  
I sat alone : white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin  
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's :  
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm  
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech  
 Came down upon my heart.

" ' My own Cænone,  
 Beautiful-brow'd Cænone, my own soul,  
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n  
 " For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,  
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
 And added ' This was cast upon the board,  
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon  
 Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due :  
 But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
 Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each  
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 It was the deep midnoon : one silvery cloud  
 Had lost his way between the piney sides  
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
 Violet, amaracus and asphodel,  
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,  
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
 With bunch and berry and flower thro’ and thro’.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd  
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows  
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
 Wherewith to embellish state, ‘ from many a vale  
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
 Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore. ’

Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,  
From many an inland town and haven large,  
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
'Which in all action is the end of all ;  
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns  
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
Only, are likest Gods, who have attain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power  
Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood  
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,

The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ ‘ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall’d for), but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said : ‘ I woo thee not with gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias’d by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God’s,  
 To push thee forward thro’ a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew’d with action, and the full-grown will,

Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceas'd,  
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,  
Give it to Pallas !' but he heard me not,  
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Idalian Aphroditè beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form  
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,'  
She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight for fear :  
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,

As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower ;  
 And from that time to this I am alone,  
 And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Fairest—why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?  
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
 Crouch’d fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?  
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
 My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge  
 High over the blue gorge, and all between  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
 Foster’d the callow eaglet—from beneath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn  
 The panther’s roar came muffled, while I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more

Shall lone GENONE see the morning mist  
Sweep thro' them ; never see them overlaid  
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,  
The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind  
And tell her to her face how much I hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
In this green valley, under this green hill,  
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?  
Seal'd it with kisses ? water'd it with tears ?  
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !  
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?  
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?  
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
There are enough unhappy on this earth,

Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :  
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
 Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
 Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
 Conjectures of the features of her child  
 Ere it is born : her child !—a shudder comes  
 Across me : never child be born of me,  
 Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes !

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
 Walking the cold and starless road of Death  
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
 With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says

A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

## THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race :  
She was the fairest in the face :  
    The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
They were together, and she fell ;  
Therefore revenge became me well.  
    O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.  
    The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait :  
    O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bade him come ;  
I won his love, I brought him home.  
    The wind is roaring in turret and tree.

And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head :  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM..

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind)  
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,  
Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters  
That doat upon each other, friends to man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,  
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears  
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,  
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade  
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :  
“ Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide.”

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,  
In each a squared lawn, wherfrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, " And who shall gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise? "

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,  
And, while day sank or mounted higher  
The light aërial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.  
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,  
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,  
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd  
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there  
Not less than truth design'd.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx  
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily ;  
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blue unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne :  
From one hand droop'd a crocus : one hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
Not less than life, design'd.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,  
Mov'd of themselves, with silver sound ;  
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung  
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings ;  
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells  
Began to chime. She took her throne :  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame  
Two godlike faces gazed below ;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,  
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,  
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these are mine,  
And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me." She—when young night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands and cried,  
" I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

“O all things fair to sate my various eyes !  
 O shapes and hues that please me well !  
 O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
 My Gods, with whom I dwell !

“O God-like isolation which art mine,  
 I can but count thee perfect gain,  
 What time I watch the darkening droves of swine  
 That range on yonder plain.

“In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
 They graze and wallow, breed and sleep ;  
 And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
 And drives them to the deep.”

Then of the moral instinct would she prize  
 And of the rising from the dead,  
 As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate ;  
 And at the last she said :

“I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
 I care not what the sects may brawl.  
 I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
 But contemplating all.”

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she thrrove and prosper'd: so three years  
She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight  
The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was born  
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn..

"What! is not this my place of strength," she said,  
"My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid  
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes ; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
Left on the shore ; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
"No voice," she shriek'd in that lone hall,  
"No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world :  
One deep, deep silence all !"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,  
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh,  
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.

There comes no murmur of reply.

What is it that will take away my sin,

And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,

She threw her royal robes away.

"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,

"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are

So lightly, beautifully built :

Perchance I may return with others there

When I have purged my guilt."

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
    Of me you shall not win renown :  
You thought to break a country heart  
    For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
    I saw the snare, and I retired :  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
    You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
    I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
    Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
    A heart that doats on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
    Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall :  
The guilt of blood is at your door :  
    You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
You held your course without remorse,  
    To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
    And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue heavens above us bent  
The gardener Adam and his wife  
    Smile at the claims of long descent.  
How'er it be, it seems to me,  
    'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
    And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
You pine among your halls and towers :  
The languid light of your proud eyes  
    Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
    But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
    You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If Time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

### THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear ;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year ;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest mer-  
riest day ;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so  
bright as mine ;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caro-  
line :  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they  
say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never  
wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to  
break :  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and  
garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I  
see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-  
tree ?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him  
yesterday,—  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in  
white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of  
light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they  
say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never  
be :

They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that  
to me?

There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer  
day,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the  
green,

And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the  
Queen;

For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from  
far away,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy  
bows,

And 'by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet  
cuckoo-flowers;

And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in  
swamps and hollows gray,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the  
meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as  
they pass;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the  
livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance  
and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year:  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest  
day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If ~~you're~~ waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my  
peace of mind;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall  
never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the  
tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a  
merry day;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me  
Queen of May;  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel  
copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white  
chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on  
the pane:  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on  
high:  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-  
tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer  
o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering  
grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of  
mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,

Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the  
hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world  
is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the  
waning light

You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at  
night;

When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow  
cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush  
in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn  
shade,

And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am  
lowly laid.

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when  
you pass,

With your feet above my head in the long and  
pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me  
now;

You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere  
I go;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be  
wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another  
child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-  
place;  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your  
face;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you  
say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far  
away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight for  
evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the  
door;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be  
growing green:  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:  
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden  
more :

But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush  
that I set  
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call me before the day is  
born.

All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother  
dear.

## CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the  
lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the  
• year !  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the  
violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the  
skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that  
cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers  
that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to  
go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,

And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done !

But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there !

O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head !

A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.

Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in :

Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,

For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,

There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet :

But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in  
mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was  
over all;  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to  
roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my  
soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie  
dear;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt  
resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me—I know not  
what was said;  
\*For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my  
mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, " It's not for them :  
it's mine."

And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a  
sign.

And once again it came, and close beside the window-  
bars,

Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among  
the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I  
know

The blessed music went that way my soul will have to  
go.

And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.

But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past  
away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to  
fret ;

There's many a worthier than I, would make him  
happy yet.

If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his  
wife ;

But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire  
of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow ;

He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.

And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—

Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done

The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—

For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—  
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—

And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—

And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

“COURAGE !” he said, and pointed toward the land,  
“ This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”  
In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;  
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;  
And some thro’ wavering lights and shadows broke,  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;  
A land where all things always seem'd the same !  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,

Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, "We will return no more;"  
And all at once they sang, "Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

## CHORIC SONG.

## I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful  
skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

## II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness?

All things have rest : why should we toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
“There is no joy but calm !”  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of  
things ?

## III.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
Should life all labour be ?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil ? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

## V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;  
To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;

To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

## VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change ;  
For surely now our household hearths are cold :  
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
Is there confusion in the little isle ?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
There *is* confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labour unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelid still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—  
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the  
pine.

## VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-  
dust is blown.  
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge  
was seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-  
fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,

In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are  
hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are  
lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming  
world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring  
deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,  
and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful  
song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are  
strong ;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the  
soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;  
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd  
—down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the  
shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave  
and oar;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander  
more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
 " *The Legend of Good Women,*" long ago  
 Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
 His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
 Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
 With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
 Held me above the subject, as strong gales  
 Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,  
 Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
 I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
 Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
 The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clang ing hoofs :  
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew  
The maiden splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest  
green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,  
"Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stiller than chisell'd marble, standing there ;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise

Froze my swift speech : she turning on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

“ I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :

No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came  
I brought calamity.”

“ No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field

Myself for such a face had boldly died,”  
I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,

To her full height her stately stature draws ;

“ My youth,” she said, “ was blasted with a curse :  
This woman was the cause.

“ I was cut off from hope in that sad place,

Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears :  
My father held his hand upon his face ;  
I, blinded with my tears,

“ Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with sighs

As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;  
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore ;  
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ;  
Touch'd ; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow :  
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,  
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,  
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,  
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :  
"I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
 One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
 That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,  
 Where is Mark Antony ?

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
 On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :  
 The Nilus would have risen before his time  
 And flooded at our nod.

"We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
 Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O my life  
 In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,  
 The flattery and the strife,

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,  
 My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
 My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
 Contented there to die !

"And there he died : and when I heard my name  
 Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear  
 Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his fame.  
 What else was left ? look here !"

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
 The polish'd argent of her breast to sight  
 Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
 Showing the aspick's bite).

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
A name for ever!—lying robed and crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause, I knew not for delight;  
Because with sudden motion from the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird  
That claps his wings at dawn.

"The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine :  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure ; as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : "Heaven heads the count of  
crimes  
With that wild oath." She render'd answer high :  
"Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

“ My God, my land, my father—these did move  
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,  
Lower’d softly with a threefold cord of love  
Down to a silent grave.

“ And I went mourning, ‘ No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers’—emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

“ Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower.

“ The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darken’d glen,

“ Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

“ When the next moon was roll’d into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall’d my desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire !

“ It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father’s will ;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

“ Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew’d Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.” Here her face  
Glow’d, as I look’d at her.

She lock’d her lips : she left me where I stood :  
“ Glory to God,” she sang, and past afar.  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.

“ Alas ! alas !” a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur’d beside me : “ Turn and look on me :  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.

“ Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !  
O me, that I should ever see the light !  
Those dragon eyes of anger’d Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night.”

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :  
To whom the Egyptian : "O, you tamely died !  
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust  
The dagger thro' her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,  
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance  
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France ;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike  
Into that wondrous track of dreams again !  
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,  
Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,  
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

## THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :  
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,  
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou mayst warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :  
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that cold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry :  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

## TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!

In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
I honour and his living worth :  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I :  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
“ Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.”

Let Grief be her own mistress still.

She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, “God’s ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind;”  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seem’d distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
*How should I soothe you anyway,*  
Who miss the brother of your youth?  
Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:  
Both are my friends, and my true breast  
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

## ON A MOURNER.

## I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
 Imitates God, and turns her face  
 To every land beneath the skies,  
 Counts nothing that she meets with base,  
 But lives and loves in every place;

## II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
 And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
 Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
 The swamp, where hums the dropping snipe,  
 With moss and braided marish-pipe;

## III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
 Saying, "Beat quicker, for the time  
 Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
 Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
 Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

## IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
 Going before to some far shrine,  
 Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
 Till all thy life one way incline  
 With one wide will that closes thine.

## V.

And when the zoning eve has died  
 Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
 Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,  
 From out the borders of the morn,  
 With that fair child betwixt them born.

## VI.

And when no mortal motion jars  
 The blackness round the tombing sod,  
 Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
 Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,  
 And Virtue, like a household god

## VII.

Promising empire ; such as those  
 That once at dead of night did greet  
 Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
 With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
 Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist ;  
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or foes  
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom broadens slowly down  
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet :  
Above her shook the starry lights :  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes !

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;  
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
 Before her to whatever sky  
 Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :  
 Cut Prejudice against the grain :  
 But gentle words are always gain :  
 Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
 Of pension, neither count on praise :  
 It grows to guerdon after-days :  
 Nor deal in watchwords overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;  
 Not master'd by some modern term ;  
 Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :  
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
 With Life, that, working strongly, binds—  
 Set in all lights by many minds,  
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
 And moist and dry, devising long,  
 Thro' many agents making strong,  
 Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
 We all are changed by still degrees,  
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
 To ingroove itself with that which flies,  
 And work, a joint of state, that plies  
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;  
 For all the past of Time reveals  
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
 A motion toiling in the gloom—  
 The Spirit of the years to come  
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
 Completion in a painful school ;  
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
 New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,  
 But vague in vapour, hard to mark ;  
 And round them sea and air are dark  
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.

Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head ;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossoms of the dead ;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

## ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man  
To rule by land and sea,  
Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
Who wrench'd their rights from thee !

What wonder, if in noble heat  
Those men thine arms withstood,  
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,  
And in thy spirit with thee fought—  
Who sprang from English blood !

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
Lift up thy rocky face,  
And shatter, when the storms are black,  
In many a streaming torrent back,  
The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law  
The growing world assume,  
Thy work is thine—The single note  
From that deep chord which Hampden smote  
Will vibrate to the doom.

## THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
 Her rags scarce held together ;  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
 He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
 "Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,  
 It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
 A goose—'twas no great matter.  
 The goose let fall a golden egg  
 With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
 And ran to tell her neighbours ;  
 And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
 And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied ;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder :  
But ah ! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

“A quinsy choke thy cursed note !”  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
“Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer.”

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,  
    He utter'd words of scorning ;  
“ So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
    It is a stormy morning.”

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
    And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
    And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
    The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
    And a whirlwind clear'd the larder :  
  
And while on all sides breaking loose  
    Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, “ The Devil take the goose,  
    And God forget the stranger !”

## ENGLISH IDYLLS.



## THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,  
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the Church-commissioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith

Right thro' the world, "at home was little left,  
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,  
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."  
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."  
"Why, yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way  
At college : but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
What came of that?" "You know," said Frank, 'he  
burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books"—  
And then to me demanding why? "Oh, sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said, or else  
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.  
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,  
"Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
Nor we those times ; and why should any man  
Remodel models ? these twelve books of mine  
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." "But I,"  
Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this hearth  
And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.  
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."  
He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy, like a horse  
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ;

For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
When we were Freshmen : then at my request  
He brought it ; and the poet little urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,  
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

## MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonness about their Lord,  
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
“ The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
“I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.”

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
“Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud,  
“ And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done ?  
What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'  
So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :  
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,  
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath  
“ Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
“ Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.”

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
“ My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.”

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick !  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware

That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them  
rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"  
And to the barge they came. There those three  
Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the daïs-throne—were parch'd with dust;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
 " Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?  
 For now I see the true old times are dead,  
 When every morning brought a noble chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :  
 " The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
 May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by  
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and  
fell :

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but  
we

Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—  
Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—  
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;  
I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year  
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
"There now—that's nothing!" drew a little back,  
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :  
And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,  
"Arthur is come again : he cannot die."  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—"Come again, and thrice as fair ;"

And, further inland, voices echoed—"Come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more."  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ;  
OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,  
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew  
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules ;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little ;—Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless moons,

The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing ! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
“ When will *you* paint like this ? ” and I replied,  
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)  
“ ‘Tis not your work, but Love’s. Love, unperceived,  
A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes  
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.”  
And Juliet answer’d laughing, “ Go and see  
The Gardener’s daughter : trust me, after that,  
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.”  
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells ;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
The windy clanging of the minster clock ;  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash’d by a slow broad stream,  
That, stirr’d with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,

Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,  
And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen : not less among us lived  
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard  
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,  
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,  
So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.'

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,  
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,  
Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul ;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm

To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream  
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,  
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud  
Drew downward : but all else of heaven was pure  
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
And May with me from head to heel. And now,  
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,  
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)  
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
And, where the hedgerow cuts the pathway, stood,  
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,  
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,  
But shook his song together as he near'd  
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,  
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;  
The redcap whistled ; and the nightingale

Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,  
"Hear how the bushes echo ! by my life,  
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing  
Like poets, from the vanity of song ?  
Or have they any sense of why they sing ?  
And would they praise the heavens for what they have?"  
And I made answer, "Were there nothing else  
For which to praise the heavens but only love,  
That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,  
And on we went ; but ere an hour had pass'd,  
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North ;  
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us  
To one green wicket in a privet hedge ;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned ;  
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew  
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.  
The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.  
The garden-glasses shone, and momently  
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."  
He nodded, but a moment afterwards

He cried, "Look ! look !" Before he ceased I turn'd,  
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,  
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,  
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—  
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—  
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.  
A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
Pour'd on one side : the shadow of the flowers  
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—  
Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,  
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced  
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground !  
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd  
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,  
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast  
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,  
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house ; but she, a Rose  
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd  
Into the world without ; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,

This murmur broke the stillness of that air  
Which brooded round about her :

“ Ah, one rose,  
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,  
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips  
Less exquisite than thine.”

She look'd : but all  
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd  
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,  
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound  
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips  
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,  
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star  
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way  
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
“ Now,” said he, “ will you climb the top of Art.  
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titanic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master, Love,  
A more ideal Artist he than all.”

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,  
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving—such a noise of life  
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice  
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such  
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.  
And all that night I heard the watchman peal  
The sliding season : all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.  
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odours on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,  
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor  
storm  
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.  
Light pretexts drew me : sometimes a Dutch love  
For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city-rooms ; or fruits and cream  
Served in the weeping elm ; and more and more  
A word could bring the colour to my cheek ;  
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew ;  
Love trebled life within me, and with each  
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,  
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd :  
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;  
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace  
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,  
Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an hour  
For Eustace, when I heard his deep "I will,"  
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold  
From thence thro' all the worlds : but I rose up  
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes  
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both ; and over many a range  
Of wanling lime the gray cathedral towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows : from them clash'd  
The bells ; we listen'd ; with the time we play'd ;  
We spoke of other things ; we coursed about  
The subject most at heart, more near and near,  
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round  
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,

Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;  
And in that time and place she answer'd me,  
And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,  
The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering, "I am thine."

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say  
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full  
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades  
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed  
I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,  
Holding the folded annals of my youth ;  
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,  
And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
And spake, "Be wise : not easily forgiven  
Are those, who setting wide the doors that bar  
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—  
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs  
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,  
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell  
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,  
And vows, where there was never need of vows,  
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap  
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale  
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars ;  
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,  
And in the hollows ; or as once we met  
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain  
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,  
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent  
On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds  
May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul ;  
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes : the time  
Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,

As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

## DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,  
And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."  
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd towards William; but the youth, because  
He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

'Then there came a day  
When Allan call'd his son, and said, "My son :  
I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well  
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter: he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died

In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
 His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;  
 For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
 For many years." But William answer'd short ;  
 "I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
 I will not marry Dora." Then the old man  
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :  
 "You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !  
But in my time a father's word was law,  
 And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;  
 Consider, William : take a month to think,  
 And let me have an answer to my wish ;  
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
 And never more darken my doors again."  
 But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips,  
 And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
 The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;  
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
 The month was out he left his father's house,  
 And hired himself to work within the fields ;  
 And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
 A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd  
 His niece and said : " My girl, I love you well ;  
 But if you speak with him that was my son,  
 Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
 My home is none of yours. My will is law."

And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
"It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change!"

And days went on, and there was born a boy  
To William ; then distresses came on him ;  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :

"I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
And for this orphan, I am come to you :  
You know there has not been for these five years  
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad  
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way  
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not; for none of all his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,  
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;  
And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?  
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"  
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"  
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not  
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:  
"Do with me as you will, but take the child,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's ^"  
And Allan said, "I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman i.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you

You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;  
But go you hence, and never see me more.”

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud  
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell  
At Dora’s feet. She bow’d upon her hands,  
And the boy’s cry came to her from the field,  
More and more distant. She bow’d down her head,  
Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She bow’d down  
And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap’d,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary’s house, and stood  
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise  
To God, that help’d her in her widowhood.  
And Dora said, “ My uncle took the boy ;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :  
He says that he will never see me more.”  
Then answer’d Mary, “ This shall never be,  
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :  
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;  
And I will beg of him to take thee back :

But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one house,  
And work for William's child, until he grows  
Of age to help us."

So the women kiss'd  
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.  
The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw  
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him : and the lad stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.  
Then they came in : but when the boy beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her :  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :

"O Father !—if you let me call you so—  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child ; but now I come  
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace  
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father thus :  
'God bless him !' he said, 'and may he never know  
The troubles I have gone thro' !' Then he turn'd

His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am !  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight  
His father's memory ; and take Dora back,  
And let all this be as it was before .”

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;  
And all at once the old man burst in sobs :—  
“I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd  
my son.  
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.  
May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.  
Kiss me, my children.”

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.  
And all the man was broken with remorse ;  
And all his love came back a hundredfold ;  
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child  
Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
Within one house together ; and as years  
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## AUDLEY COURT.

“THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm’d, and not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court.”

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Humm’d like a hive all round the narrow quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. “With all my heart,”  
Said Francis. Then we shoulder’d thro’ the swarm,  
And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp’d  
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach’d  
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass’d thro’ all  
The pillar’d dusk of sounding sycamores,

And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied ; last, with these,  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew ; and so we sat and eat  
And talk'd old matters over ; who was dead,  
Who married, who was like to be, and how  
The races went, and who would rent the hall :  
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was  
This season ; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,  
The four-field system, and the price of grain ;  
. And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
And came again together on the king  
With heated faces ; till he laugh'd aloud ;  
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung  
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—

“Oh ! who would fight and march and counter-  
march,  
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,

And shovell'd up into some bloody trench  
Where no one knows ? but let me live my life.

“ Oh ! who would cast and balance at a desk,  
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,  
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
Are full of chalk ? but let me live my life.

“ Who'd serve the state ? for if I carved my name  
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
I might as well have traced it in the sands ;  
The sea wastes all : but let me live my life.

“ Oh ! who would love ? I woo'd a woman once,  
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
Turns from the sea ; but let me live my life.”

He sang his song, and I replied with mine :  
I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,  
His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
I set the words, and added names I knew.

“ Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me :  
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

“ Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm ;  
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

“ Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast :  
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip :  
I go to-night : I come to-morrow morn.  
“ I go, but I return : I would I were  
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.”

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,  
My friend ; and I, that having wherewithal,  
And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would ; but ere the night we rose  
And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just  
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills ; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,  
The town was hush'd beneath us : lower down  
The bay was oily calm ; the harbour-buoy,  
Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

## WALKING TO THE MAIL.

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look  
Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.  
Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?

No, not the County Member's with the vane:  
Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half  
A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's:  
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

- Fames.* No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face  
From all men, and commerced with himself,  
He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
That keeps us all in order more or less—  
And sick of home went overseas for change.
- John.* And whither?
- Fames.* Nay, who knows? he's here and there.  
But let him go; his devil goes with him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.
- John.* What's that?
- Fames.* You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—  
There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up  
And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;  
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—  
Caught in *flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—
- Deltio:* but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook  
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,  
And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:  
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,  
And all his household stuff; and with his boy  
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, “What!  
You're flitting!” “Yes, we're flitting,” says the ghost  
(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds.)  
“Oh well,” says he, “you flitting with us too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

*John.* He left his wife behind; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once:  
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—  
'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—  
You could not light upon a sweeter thing :  
A body slight and round, and like a pear  
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that  
loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.  
She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,  
New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd  
To what she is : a nature never kind !  
Like men, like manners : like breeds like, they say :  
Kind nature is the best : those manners next  
That fit us like a nature second-hand ;  
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that past,  
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.  
I once was near him, when his bailiff brought  
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince  
As from a venomous thing : he thought himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes  
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs  
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but, sir, you know  
That these two parties still divide the world—  
Of those that want, and those that have : and still  
The same old sore breaks out from age to age  
With much the same result. Now I myself,  
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
Destructive, when I had not what I would.  
I was at school—a college in the South :  
There lived a flayflint near : we stole his fruit,  
His hens, his eggs ; but there was law for *us* ;  
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,  
With meditative grunts of much content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.  
By night we dragg'd her to the college tower  
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair  
With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,  
And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.  
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,  
And but for daily loss of one she loved  
As one by one we took them—but for this—  
As never sow was higher in this world—  
Might have been happy : but what lot is pure ?  
We took them all, till she was left alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out?

*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the world,

Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,

As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows

To Pity—more from ignorance than will.

But put your best boot forward, or I fear

That we shall miss the mail: and here it comes

With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand

As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS ;

## OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,  
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :  
See here, my doing : curves of mountain, bridge,  
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a rock  
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,  
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimnied bulk  
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull  
The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,  
Long learned names of agaric, moss and fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd  
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion ; and he answer'd me ;  
And well his words became him : was he not  
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he spoke.

“ My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.  
My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and change  
With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between ;  
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.”

Or this or something like to this he spoke.  
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull,

“ I take it, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world.  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal ways  
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.  
I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world.”

“ Parson,” said I, “ you pitch the pipe too low :  
But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his :  
Tho’ if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce have other music : yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such a dream ? ”  
I ask’d him half-sardonically.

“ Give ?

Give all thou art,” he answer’d, and a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek ;  
“ I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin : my ears could hear  
Her lightest breath : her least remark was worth  
The experience of the wise. I went and came ;  
Her voice fled always thro’ the summer land ;  
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days !

'The flower of each, those moments when we met,  
The crown of all, we met to part no more."

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did? but something jarr'd;  
Whether he spoke too largely; that there seem'd  
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,  
Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said:

"Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone  
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?  
But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:  
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within;  
Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,  
That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place: 'tis from no want in her:  
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.  
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:  
"God made the woman for the use of man,  
And for the good and increase of the world."  
And I and Edwin laugh'd; and now we paused

About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms  
And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
By ripply shallows of the lisping lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,  
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him  
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.  
'Tis true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :  
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
The close "Your Letty, only yours ;" and this  
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn  
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart  
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel ;  
And out I stept, and up I crept : she moved,  
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers :  
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and she,  
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed  
In some new planet : a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed : "Leave," she cried,  
"O leave me !" "Never, dearest, never : here  
I brave the worst :" and while we stood like fools  
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they came

Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. "What, with him !  
Go " (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus) ; "him !" I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen—"Him !"  
Again with hands of wild rejection "Go !—  
Girl, get you in !" She went—and in one month  
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work :  
It seems I broke a close with force and arms :  
There came a mystic token from the king  
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd :  
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :  
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm ;  
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps : yet long ago  
I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed,  
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
For in the dust and drouth of London life  
She moves among my visions of the lake,  
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then  
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,  
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,  
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,  
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and  
snow ;  
And I had hoped that ere this period closed

Thou wouldest have caught me up into thy rest,  
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,  
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd  
 My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
 Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
 For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
 And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
 Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard  
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound  
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
 An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
 Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws nigh ;  
 I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
 So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
 About the column's base, and almost blind,  
 And scarce can recognise the fields I know ;  
 And both my thighs are rotted with the dew ;  
 Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
 While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
 Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,

Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?  
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,  
For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,  
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this  
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,  
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.  
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice  
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes  
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,  
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,  
Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy ; cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;  
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose  
Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—  
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—  
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
“ Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages ! ” then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet  
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,  
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,  
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints ;  
Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back ;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :  
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :

'Tis their own doing ; this is none of mine ;  
 Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
 That here come those that worship me ? Ha ! ha !  
 They think that I am somewhat. What am I ?  
 The silly people take me for a saint,  
 And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers :  
 And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)  
 Have all in all endured as much, and more  
 Than many just and holy men, whose names  
 Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
 What is it I can have done to merit this ?  
 I am a sinner viler than you all.  
 It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
 And cured some halt and maim'd ; but what of that ?  
 It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
 May match his pains with mine ; but what of that ?  
 Yet do not rise ; for you may look on me,  
 And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or maim'd ?  
 I think you know I have some power with Heaven  
 From my long penance : let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.  
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark ! they shout  
 " St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,  
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,

God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
Can I work miracles and not be saved ?  
This is not told of any. They were saints.  
It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;  
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, "Behold a  
saint!"

And lower voices saint me from above.  
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now  
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
I, Simeon, of the pillar, by surname  
Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,  
The watcher on the column till the end ;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;  
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath  
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve  
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
I smote them with the cross ; they swarm'd again.  
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest :  
They flapp'd my light out as I read : I saw

Their faces grow between me and my book ;  
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine  
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns ;  
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,  
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,  
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :  
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
Among the powers and princes of this world,  
To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without reproach ;  
For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,  
In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !  
Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape, a shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come.  
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;  
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?  
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!  
'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!  
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.  
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust  
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
Among you there, and let him presently  
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people; let them take  
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.